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Management  
Program



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ALPENIA

# city of alpena coastal land use and design plan

HD 211 A47 mS 1982



city of  
alpena

## coastal land use and design plan

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September 1982

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City of Alpena  
Planning Commission

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# 1

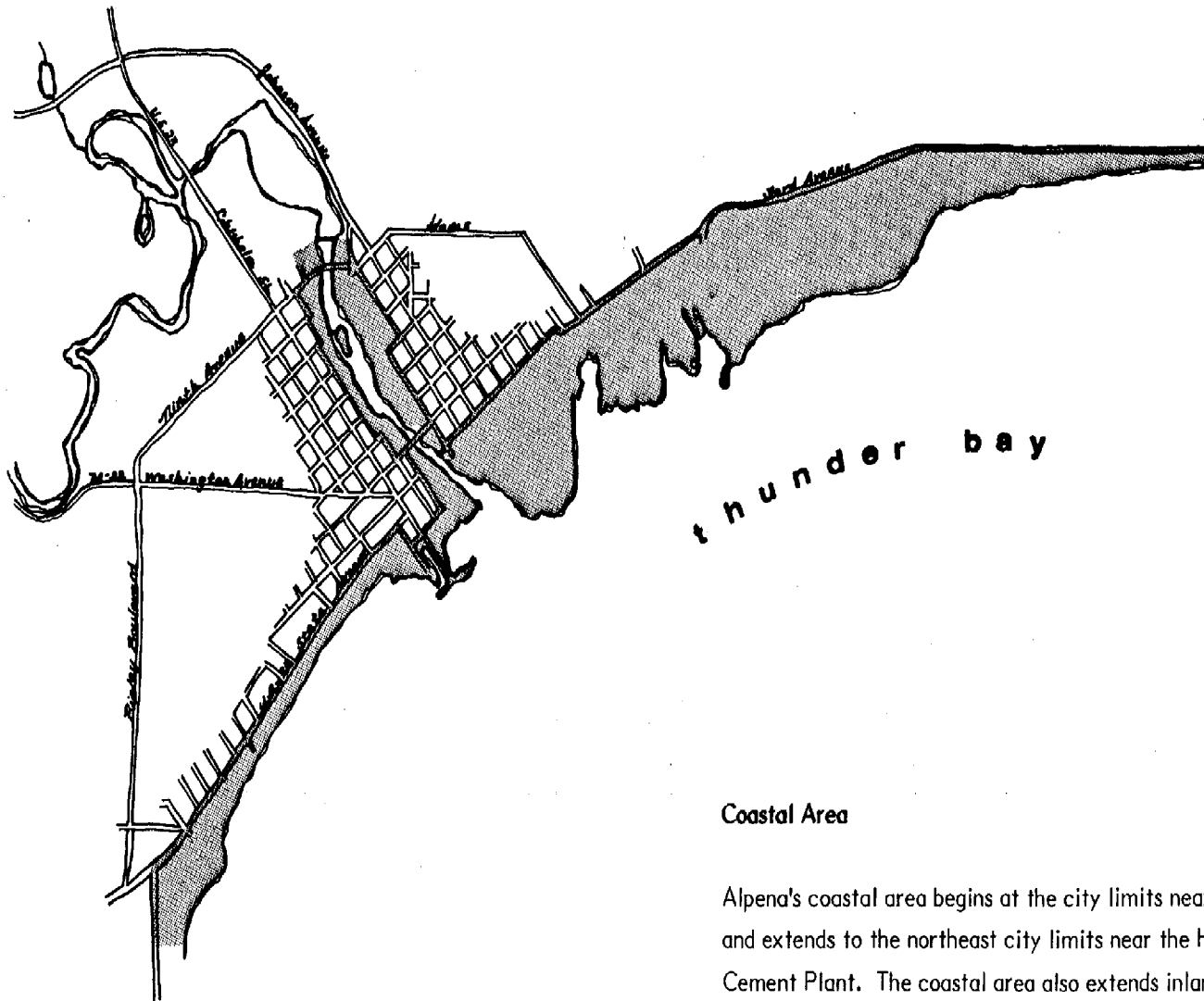
## Introduction

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

The purpose of the Coastal Land Use and Design Plan is to analyze the coastal area features, develop alternative land use and design plans, and develop a final plan with recommendations for the future use of Alpena's Coastal Area. This plan has as its main purpose, to fulfill the following goals:

- To foster and promote public recognition of the Alpena Coastal Area and the value of its resources;
- To analyze coastal land uses and recommend future uses which will optimize use of the coastal area;
- To maintain the economic integrity of coastal industries and promote new economic development opportunities;
- To maximize the recreational potential of the Thunder Bay Shoreline and the City's waterfront parks;
- To continue the improvement of the Central Business District by utilizing the waterfront and encouraging public use of downtown areas.



### Coastal Area

Alpena's coastal area begins at the city limits near Michekewis Park and extends to the northeast city limits near the Huron Portland Cement Plant. The coastal area also extends inland approximately 1000 feet and includes land adjoining the Thunder Bay River from the bay to the Ninth Street Bridge.



The City has long maintained a strong relationship with the waterfront. The City's early economy was closely linked to shipping, lumbering, fishing, and ship building. As times have changed, the use of the waterfront has changed. Parks, marinas, and residential complexes have replaced lumber mills, and docks. In the near future, additional lands within the coastal area will also change. Existing waterfront uses such as parking lots, vacant lands, and storage areas are in transition and may not be utilized to their greatest potential. It is the purpose of the Alpena Coastal Land Use and Design Plan to recommend land use and design concepts for these and other coastal areas.

### Planning Process

Recommendations included within the Plan are based upon information gathered from three major phases. The phases include:

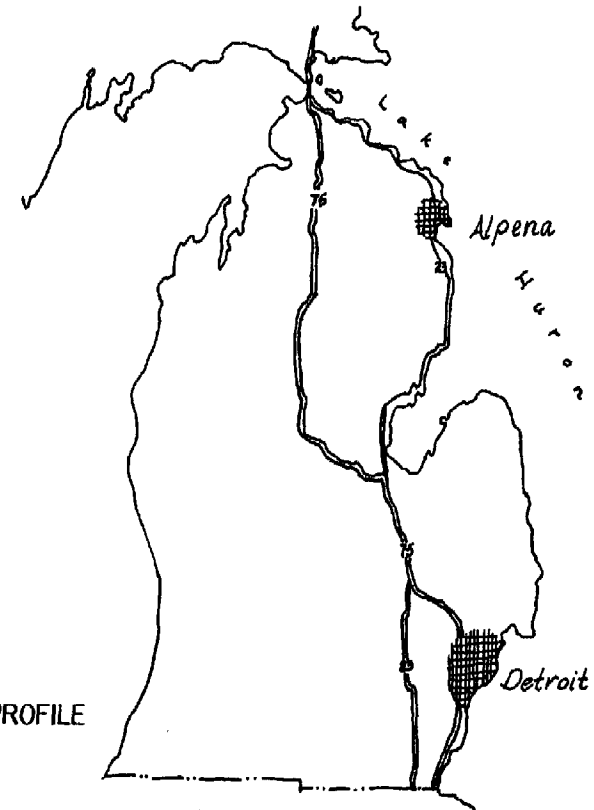
- Inventory and Analysis of the Waterfront
- Development of Preliminary Design Concepts
- Formulation of the Final Plan

The involvement of the community was actively sought during all phases of the study. A series of public workshops, questionnaires, and individual interviews was conducted to gain input and community reaction to various aspects of the Plan. Public input was instrumental in arriving at acceptable alternatives leading to a final recommended plan.

### COASTAL PROFILE

#### Location

Alpena is located 180 miles north of Detroit and 80 miles southeast of Mackinaw City. It lies just north of the forty-fifth parallel or halfway between the equator and the north pole. It is the largest community in Northeastern Michigan and is a regional center for services, goods, and government functions. The significance in the City's location lies with its relationship with Lake Huron and as a shipping center of raw materials.



## Historical Perspective

The Indians were the first to inhabit the shores of Thunder Bay and Thunder Bay River. Sheltered fishing within the safe confines of Thunder Bay plus water transportation inland along the Thunder Bay River made the area a natural site for early settlement.

The French were the first Europeans to frequent the area. From 1669 to 1763, the French laid claim to the Thunder Bay, chartered the coastal waters, and trapped furs. Afterwards, the British and United States Government laid claim to the area, but it wasn't until 1856 that the first permanent white settlers moved to the mouth of the Thunder Bay River. This also marked the start of the lumbering era.

The early lumbering operation of Alpena relied heavily upon the river to transport logs downstream for cutting. The finished lumber would then be stacked on docks located on the river or bay waiting for shipment. In 1893 the City had eleven large lumber mills and shipped an average of ten tons of fish per day. The high production of lumber and fish caused most waterfront lands near the mouth of the river to be used as docks to ship the raw materials.

After the turn of the century, lumbering declined and industrialization of Alpena began. Fletcher Paper Company and Huron Portland Cement manufactured products from locally found timber and stone. More recently Abitibi-Price Corporation added facilities within the coastal area for the production of hardboard.

In summary, Alpena's coastal history has been built upon a close relationship between industry and the waterfront. More recently, however, rail and truck lines and decentralized industrialization have severed this dependency upon the waterfront. While much of Alpena's waterfront is still industrial, commercial, residential and recreational uses are competing for scarce waterfront lands. It is likely that pressures on vacant and transitional industrial lands will be exerted. It is an objective of this Plan to determine the best use of the coastal area while maintaining ties with the City's heritage.



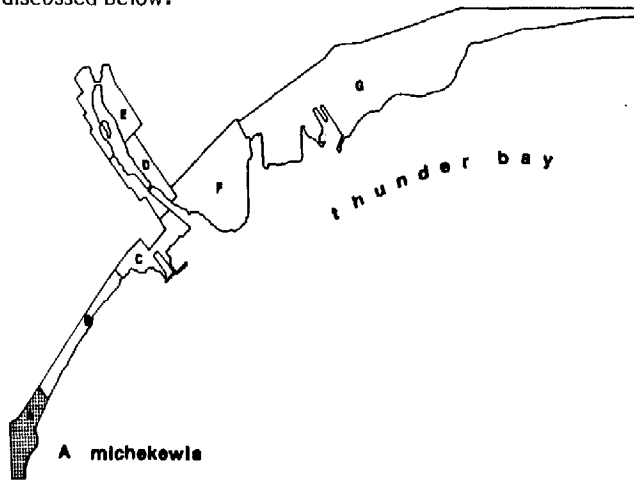
View of Alpena - 1865 - Constructing first bridge.

# 2

## Inventory and Analysis of Waterfront

## STUDY AREA ANALYSIS

Each study area was analyzed in terms of land use and zoning, natural and physical features, and problems and opportunities. Site analyses are discussed below:

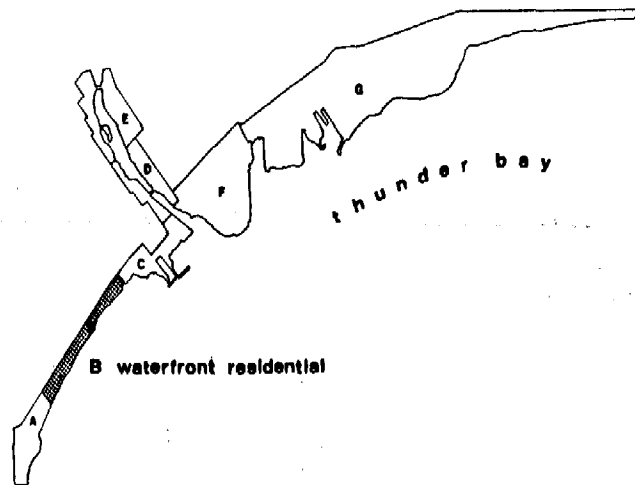


- A) Michekewis – This area is bounded by the southern city limits, State Street, and the waterfront residential area on the north. It includes Michekewis Park, Starlite Beach, the Alpena Water Treatment Plant, three motels, three restaurants, a party store, and a barber shop. The dominant use in the area is Michekewis Park, Starlite Beach, and the adjoining water treatment facility. The area contains the largest public beach in the City and one of the longest portions of undisturbed shoreline in the City. The area also contains the City's Ice Arena and speedskating complex. Conclusions regarding the areas problems and opportunities are as follows:



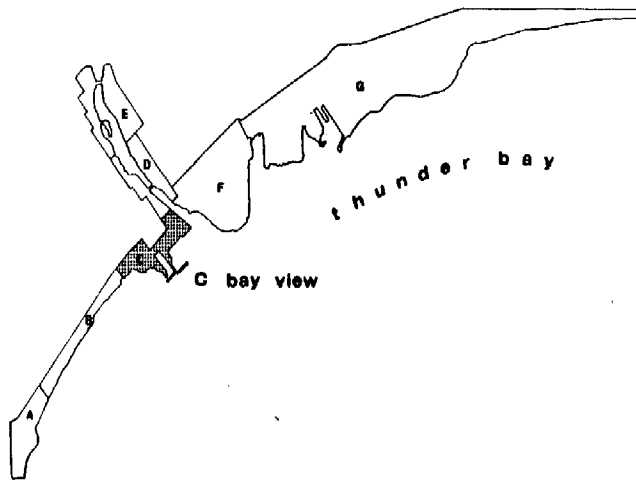
- 1) Motorists and tourists along State Street are unable to view the Thunder Bay. Views are blocked by the Ice Arena, water treatment facility, and adjoining commercial uses.
- 2) Residents have noted that Michekewis and Starlite Beaches and swimming areas are often poorly maintained and cluttered with debris.
- 3) The south limits of Michekewis Beach offers an attractive setting for picnicking and beach use. Large willow trees and large open areas make this area an ideal location for expanded park use.

- 4) Existing gravel parking areas and gravel entrance roads are haphazard and poorly defined. However, the City is in the process of upgrading access and parking facilities.
- 5) Some adjoining commercial establishments may undergo transitional phases in the near future. Opportunities will likely be available for public acquisition or private investment and redevelopment.
- 6) Encroaching strip development is impacting South State Street. Excessive signs, curb cuts and poor visual images are commonplace.



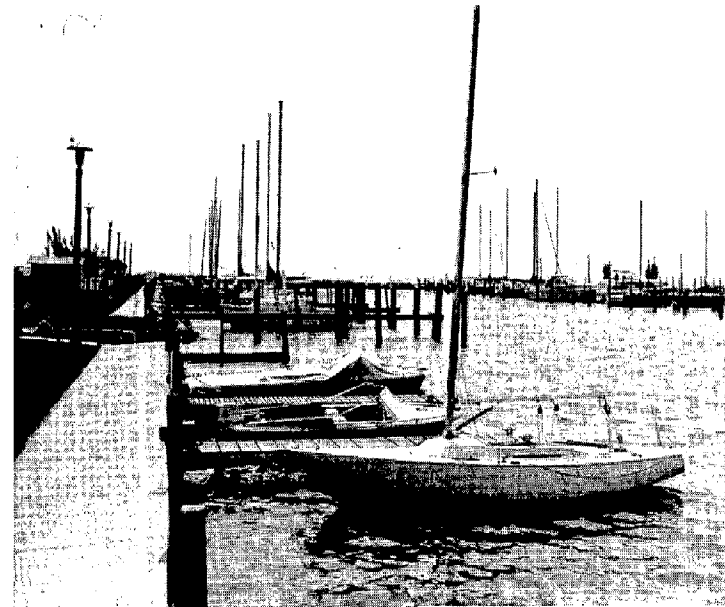
B) Waterfront Residential – Thirty-two waterfront homes are located in this area. The homes are in excellent condition and are occupied by middle income and upper income groups. The area is an attractive tree-lined neighborhood with new sidewalks and a recently improved street. Blair Park and Thompson Park are also located in the area. Thompson Park is one of the more popular beaches in the City. Conclusions regarding the areas problems and opportunities are as follows:

- 1) State Street residences are impacted by traffic volumes and noise.
- 2) Thompson Park creates parking problems during peak use periods along neighborhood side streets.
- 3) The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has designated portions of the area as High Risk Erosion Areas.
- 4) The Federal Insurance Administration has designated portions of the area as a Special Flood Hazard Area.
- 5) The Blair Street storm sewer outfall pier is in disrepair. The original wood decking has been removed and the structure is an attractive nuisance to juveniles who attempt to walk on the structure.



- C) Bay View -- Bay View Park is one of the more intensively used parks within the City and the closest major park to the Central Business District. Present facilities include tennis court, tot-lot, marina, and boat launch. In addition, the Alpena Yacht Club and a marine supply store maintain facilities at the park. The Alpena School District owns park property near the west side of the park and the City operates their sewage treatment plant on the eastern side of the site. Conclusions regarding the areas problems and opportunities are as follows:

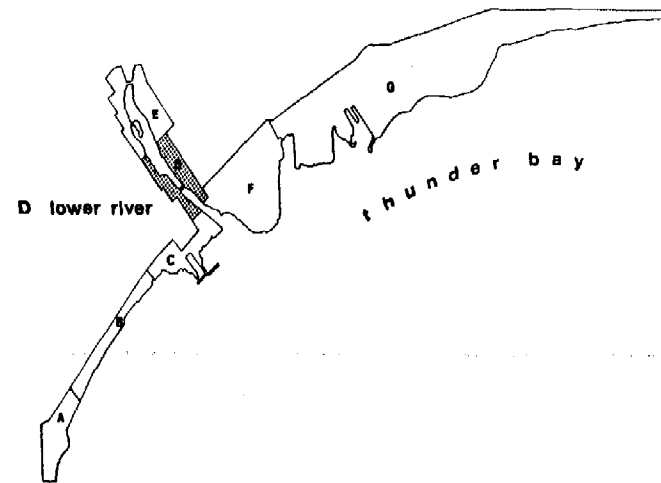
- 1) The existing marina contains 50 boat slips, and marina operators are currently maintaining waiting lists for dock-age. There is a need for an expanded boat harbor.



- 2) Winter boat storage adjoining Harbor Drive and the Central Business District is unattractive.
- 3) The wastewater treatment plant is visually imposing and interferes with public access to the waterfront.
- 4) Existing gravel entrance drives and parking lots are haphazard and poorly defined.

- 5) While the park is in close proximity to the Central Business District, there is little pedestrian connection between the park and the downtown area. Pedestrian improvements and sidewalk landscaping have not been accomplished on Chisholm Street between the park and the Central Business District.
- 6) The park adjoins isolated residences along State Avenue and Harbor Drive. These residences may become available for public acquisition and inclusion within Bay View Park.
- 7) The western portion of the park offers an attractive setting for picnicking and waterfront pathways.

- D) Lower River – The Lower River area includes lands along the Thunder Bay River from the Federal Armory upstream to the Fletcher Paper Company. It also includes the Riverfront Reserve, the Second Street Bridge area, the Detroit and Mackinac property, and lands along the Thunder Bay River north of the bridge. Specific conclusions regarding the areas problems and opportunities are as follows:

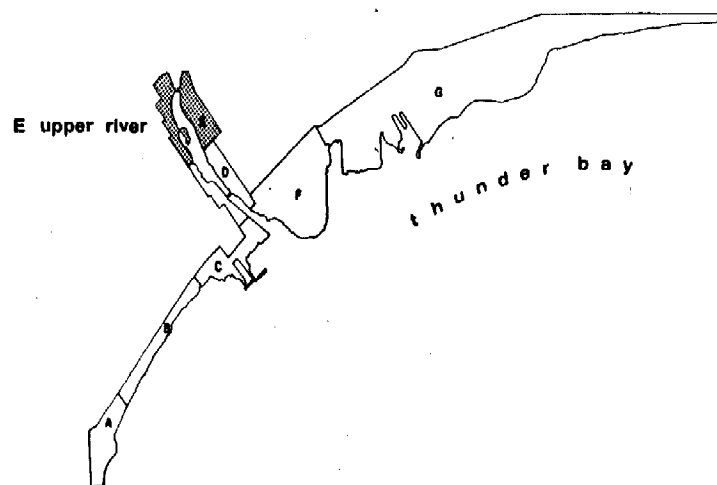


- 1) The Riverfront Reserve Area behind the Federal Armory is an attractive facility and is often used by downtown workers, tourists, and fishermen.
- 2) The Second Street drawbridge is currently inoperable. While auto traffic still uses the bridge, the bridge will not open to permit the passage of large boats. It is estimated that repairs for this structure would cost approximately \$500,000.



- 3) The City currently owns and maintains a parking facility for approximately 40 cars. While demands for parking are high in the downtown area, the City could explore optional uses which would utilize the attractiveness of the waterfront.
- 4) The Detroit and Mackinac Railroad currently owns property on the north side of the river. Portions of the land are vacant and other portions are used for warehouses. While the Railroad has expressed an interest in maintaining the current uses, future demands for waterfront property may cause a change in land use and development of new uses.
- 5) The Alpena Savings Bank owns a one-and-a-half acre site on the river and has expressed an interest in constructing a new office building.
- 6) Historically the Thunder Bay River has been a site for industrial development. Under new times, however, new opportunities for the riverfront have emerged and include uses such as shops, offices, and residences, which will utilize the attractiveness of the river.





E) Upper River – The Upper River area includes lands along the Thunder Bay River from Fletcher Paper Company to the Ninth Street Bridge. Also included is the Albert Fowler Senior Citizen Complex, the Alpena Boy's Club, and La Marre Park. The following conclusions regarding the problems and opportunities of the area are presented:

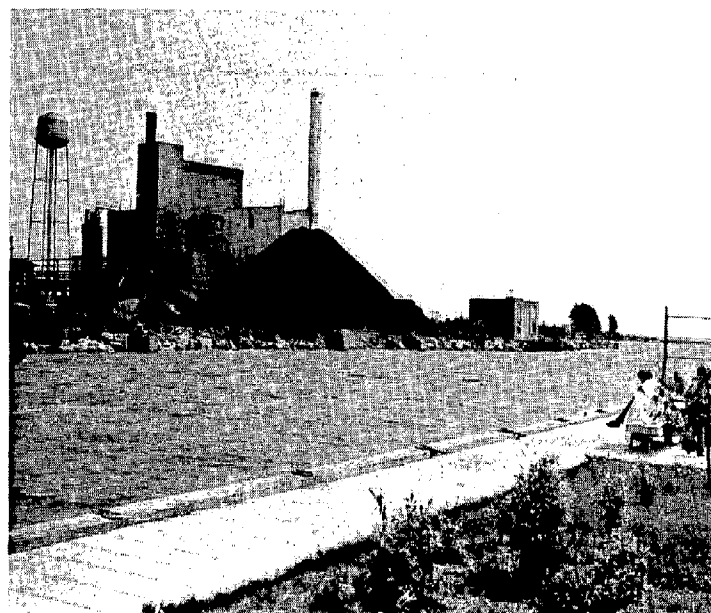
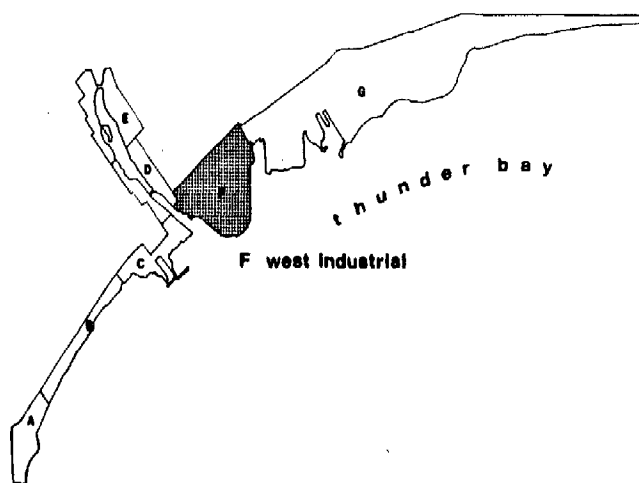
- 1) The banks of the river are heavily used for fishing and fishing access. In some areas shoreline erosion has occurred from over use and disturbance.
- 2) The west bank of the river is proposed for development of the Bi-Path as presented in previous plans.



- 3) Senior citizens and other waterfront residents have expressed concerns about unlimited access along the river as proposed in the Bi-Path plans.

- 4) Island Mill has been considered as a river park by neighboring residents and by City officials. It should be noted, however, that the island is currently owned by Fletcher Paper Company.
- 5) Island Mill was the site of an early lumber mill. If developed as a park, the island holds the potential for historic markers and the placement of interpretive displays.
- 6) The City currently owns land occupied by the water tower on Ninth Street. This land has the potential for development as a riverfront park.

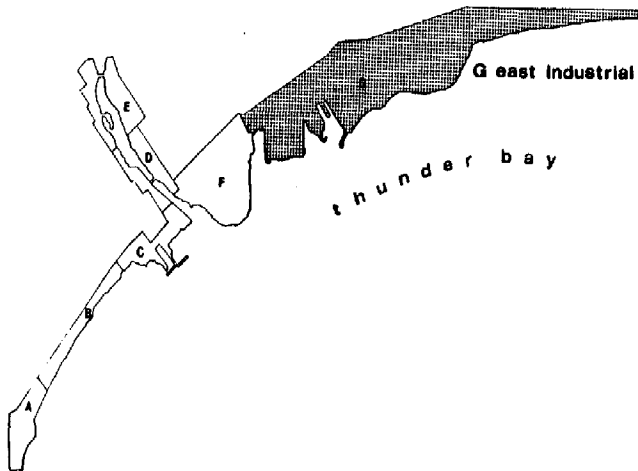
- F) West Industrial - This land includes land occupied by the Abitibi-Price Corporation and residences along Ford Street. Approximately 30 homes are located adjacent to the Abitibi plant. The following conclusions can be made regarding the problems and opportunities of the area.



- 1) While the Abitibi-Price plant has strengthened the local economy, the close proximity of the plant to residential areas has affected local populations. The plant is currently seeking a relaxation of water quality and air quality requirements.

- 2) Storage piles of raw materials, such as coal and wood, and the building structure create a visual impact and can be seen from most areas in the coastal zone.
- 3) Current employment is approximately 385 and this labor force level is expected to remain stable for the next few years.

- 4) The plant has no further plans for acquisition of residential properties along Ford Road.
- 5) The plant ships finished products via the Detroit and Mackinac Railroad spur paralleling Fletcher Street and via truck traffic using Fletcher Street and Ford Road.



- G) East Industrial - This area includes land occupied by the National Gypsum Corporation - Huron Portland Cement Plant. Specific conclusions regarding the areas problems and opportunities are as follows:

- 1) The plant is relatively isolated from residential areas and most impacts to the coastal area are limited to dust and the visual impacts of building structures.
- 2) Approximately 250 employees are now working at the plant. This is down from a full work force of approximately 650 employees.
- 3) While there are no current plans for expansion there are concerns that the existing port facilities and shipping channel may have to be expanded to accommodate larger lake freighters.
- 4) The Cement Plant is the largest facility of its kind in the United States. There exists an opportunity for expanded interpretive facilities for tourists which point out views of the quarry, the cement making process, and the function of various facilities.
- 5) The area includes privately held property near Norwegian Creek which is currently used for swimming and picnicking. The beach is one of the most popular swimming areas in the City.

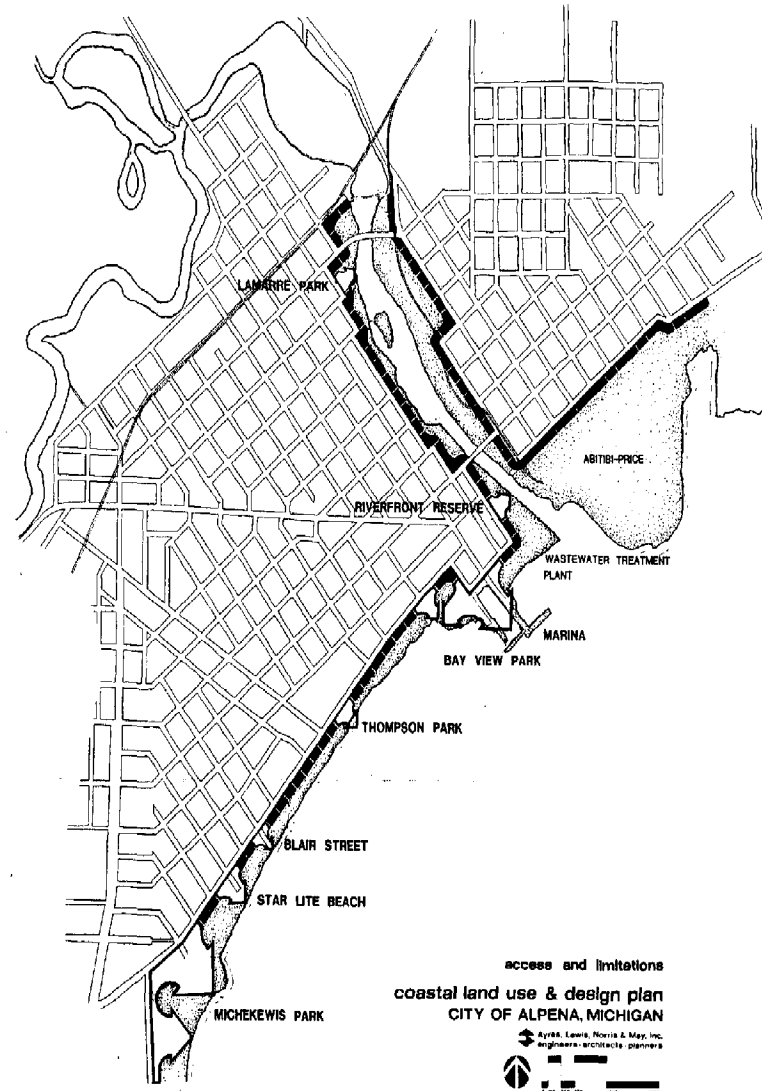
## COASTAL ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Specific conclusions regarding the problems and opportunities of each study area have been made. Broader issues and concerns impacting the entire coastal area can also be identified and analyzed. The issues and concerns are as follows:

Limited Public Access – Only 16% of the entire Thunder Bay shoreline and the Coastal River shoreline is available for public use. Public access is limited largely because of existing industrial and residential uses. However, access is also limited because the Thunder Bay and the Thunder Bay River is screened by public facilities such as the wastewater and water treatment plants, the ice arena, and the Armory.

Public access is, of course, needed for recreational activities such as fishing, boating, swimming, and picnicking. Alpena is fortunate to have sufficient beaches and picnicking areas. However, Alpena lacks a different type of waterfront access which affords views of the coastal area and utilization of the waterfront for commercial use. Visitors and residents are often unaware of the City's beaches and park areas because they cannot be seen and are poorly marked. In addition, commercial uses have not taken advantage of the waterfront. Few restaurants offer views of the Thunder Bay and Thunder Bay River and most offices and shops have oriented facilities away from the waterfront. It has been found in other cities that people like to shop, eat, and walk along the waterfront if facilities are provided.

In summary, the City of Alpena offers a unique opportunity for expanded waterfront access especially in conjunction with commercial use.



Tourism – Statistics offered by the Michigan Travel Bureau suggest that Alpena and Alpena County have fared with only limited success in attracting tourist and convention dollars. This may be partially explained by a reliance upon local industry and a desire to save the coastal resources and beauty for the residents. Yet recent economic conditions have shaken the reliance upon local industry for economic growth. New and aggressive tourism campaigns on the state and regional level have evolved. The "Say Yes to Michigan" campaign, as well as promotional efforts by the Alpena Chamber of Commerce and the Alpena Tourists Association, have been initiated.

While the City's coastal area and existing convention center are tourist drawing cards, the Thunder Bay Under Water Preserve holds the potential for being a major tourist attraction. Act 184, P.A. 1980 establishes Great Lakes bottomland preserves that have historical or recreational value. It creates the Thunder Bay Underwater Preserve which is an area encompassing all of Thunder Bay, as well as offshore areas of Alpena County to a depth of approximately 150 feet. Over 80 known shipwrecks are known to be in this area, and it is one of the richest shipwreck areas in all of the Great Lakes.

With this unique resource, the Thunder Bay area has the potential of becoming an attraction for divers and tourists. A similar underwater park in Tobermory, Canada, attracts over 15,000 visitors a year and over 5,000 divers. It is estimated that expenditures from divers alone amount to nearly a million dollars for the local economy each year.

Facilities to accommodate tourists and divers will be needed. Charter boats, dive equipment shops, offices, and information centers would be required. Questions regarding funding, administration, and location of facilities have not been resolved; however, recommendations regarding future management of this area is included in later sections of this plan.

City Entrances – Visitors and tourists typically enter the City via U.S. 23 or State Avenue. Within this corridor, the visitor's first impression of the City of Alpena is typically formed. It is important, therefore, that the City's entrance area should offer favorable views and form a favorable impression. The State Avenue, Michekewis Park area offers opportunities for improvement. Views of the coastal area could be developed and landscaping and signage improvements could be implemented within the entrance corridors.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation – The City of Alpena has already taken great strides in implementing plans set forward in the Alpena Bi-Path Plan of 1976. The plan calls for development of a bicycle pedestrian pathway along Thunder Bay and the Thunder Bay River. The pathway will eventually run from Michekewis Park to and beyond the Ninth Street Bridge. Besides providing added recreation activities, the pathway will also physically link the City's coastal parks and promote the concept of a continuous linear park along all of the City's coastal area.

Local State and Federal Laws Pertinent to the Coastal Zone – The City of Alpena adopted local zoning regulations which controls development within the coastal area. Greenbelt zoning along coastal shorelines and high risk erosion setbacks have not, however, been adopted.

A number of State and Federal statutes govern activities in the City's coastal area. These statutes are summarized in the accompanying figure. Perhaps the most important state statute is Act 247, P.A. 1955, the Great Lakes Submerged Lands Act. This Act regulates dredging, filling, and construction within the immediate shoreline area and will have an influence upon new development proposed in the coastal area.

Laws with Direct Applicability to Activities in the City of Alpena's Coastal Zone	
<u>Law</u>	<u>Type of Jurisdiction</u>
Act 245, P.A. 1970, as amended Shorelands Protection and Management Act	Local zoning or MDNR permit process regulates new construction in designated environmental, high risk erosion, and high risk flood areas. (Note: high risk erosion and environmental areas have been designated in Alpena County.)
Act 247, P.A. 1955, as amended Great Lakes Submerged Lands Act	Permit from MDNR required to modify or construct in Great Lakes bottomlands. Marina leases also issued under this Act.
Act 184, P.A. 1980 Great Lakes Bottomland Preserve	Provides for designation and protection of Thunder Bay Great Lakes bottomlands preserve. Recovery, alteration, or destruction of abandoned property in this area is not permitted without a joint permit from MDNR and Michigan Department of State - History Division.
Act 346, P.A. 1972 Inland Lakes and Streams Act	Permit from MDNR required to dredge, fill or construct in, inland lakes or streams.
Act 347, P.A. 1970 Soil Erosion & Sedimentation Control Act	Permit from local enforcement agency required if a proposed project would disturb one or more acres of land or move earth within 500 feet of a lake or stream.
Act 203, P.A. 1980 Wetlands Protection Act	Permit from MDNR required to dredge, fill, construct, or drain any wetland contiguous to inland lakes and streams, or the Great Lakes.
Section 404 Dredge and Fill Permits	Army Corps of Engineers permit program jointly administered with State Acts 346 and 247.
Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, Section 10	Administered in conjunction with Section 404 permit program.
P.L. 95-217, Clean Water Act Section 401, Water Quality Certification	Administered by MDNR - Certification that project is in compliance with State water quality standards.





## COASTAL AREA DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Coastal Land Use and Design Plan is designed to provide direction for the community to follow in the redevelopment of the coastal area so that the economic, social, and recreation values are maintained. The recommended plan consists of three elements: Development Concepts, Land Use - Design Plan, and Implementation Program.

## COASTAL AREA DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

Upon completion of the coastal area analysis, alternative land use configurations and alternative site designs were developed. The alternative plans were presented at a series of public meetings. Presentations included the consideration of land use options for each study area and site designs for specific sites within the coastal area.

Public input was an important component within the overall development of the plan and was especially important during development of concept plans. Alternative designs and land use configurations were modified according to public input. At the public meetings, questionnaires were distributed which solicited information regarding future development. Taken together, the public comment heard at the meetings and response from the questionnaires guided development of the plan.

### Unified Coastal Concept

From the public meetings, certain overriding development concepts have emerged. The concepts are broad design and planning guidelines which reflect public interest and promote unifying development principles throughout the coastal area. The development concepts are based upon input gathered at the public meetings and the detailed analysis of coastal resources.

Private Investment – Wherever possible, private investment which offers public access and public uses of the waterfront should be promoted. This would include restaurants, offices, shops, and recreation uses which utilize the unique resources of the coastal area.

Local Economy – The City's existing industrial and commercial establishments should be maintained and recognized as vital components in the City's economy. Economic development options which are compatible with coastal resources should be promoted.

Tourism – Tourism should be promoted and recognized as an important facet in the local economy. Development of recreational facilities and cultural features within the coastal area should be encouraged to serve tourism.

Central Business District – The economic well being of the central business district should be maintained. Existing commercial establishments should be closely linked to the waterfront and new facilities should utilize coastal features as an attraction for new business.

Access – Access to Alpena City's waterfront should be available for public use. Where possible, the City of Alpena should acquire additional waterfront lands and maintain existing waterfront areas for public use.

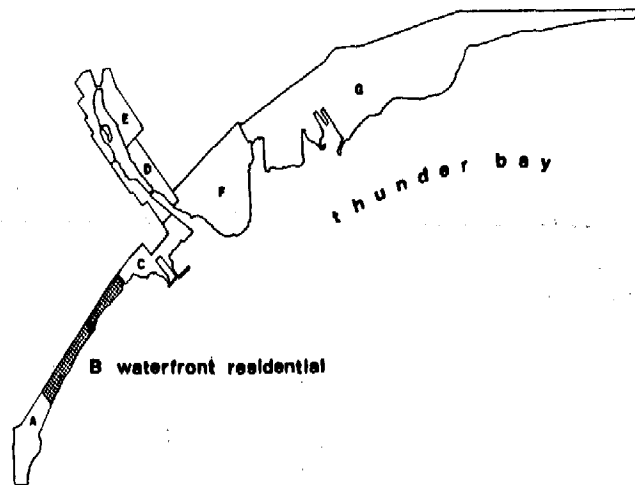
Coastal Awareness and Image – Finally the coastal area should be promoted among the residents of Alpena as a unique resource. As such, the importance and attraction of the coastal area should be publicized and where possible, programs and development plans can establish a new and vital identity for the area.

Park Improvement – It was generally agreed upon that the City should continue efforts to improve coastal area parks. Clean beaches, additional landscaping, improved water quality, and continued recreation opportunities are desired.

Park Linkage – It was determined that efforts should continue for development of the Bi-Path. The pathway would not only provide additional recreational opportunities, but physically link existing waterfront parks. The Bi-Path initiates development of a continuous linear park and green belt along the coastal area.

Land Use – It was generally felt that existing coastal land uses which present important benefits to the community should be maintained and preserved. New uses such as recreational and commercial uses should be promoted for transitional and vacant lands.

- 4) Existing gravel parking areas and gravel entrance roads are haphazard and poorly defined. However, the City is in the process of upgrading access and parking facilities.
- 5) Some adjoining commercial establishments may undergo transitional phases in the near future. Opportunities will likely be available for public acquisition or private investment and redevelopment.
- 6) Encroaching strip development is impacting South State Street. Excessive signs, curb cuts and poor visual images are commonplace.

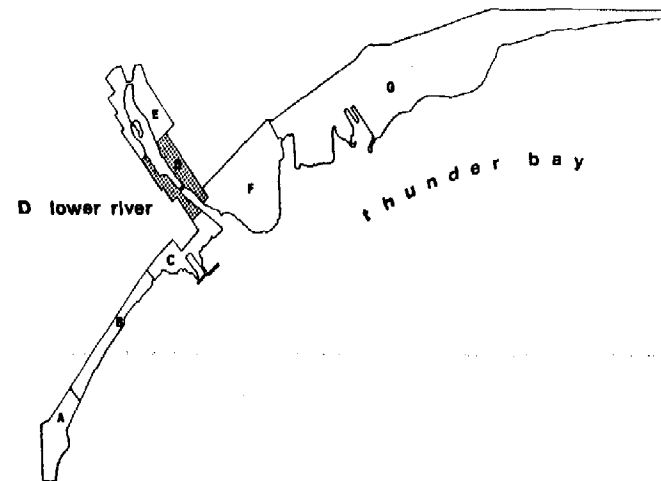


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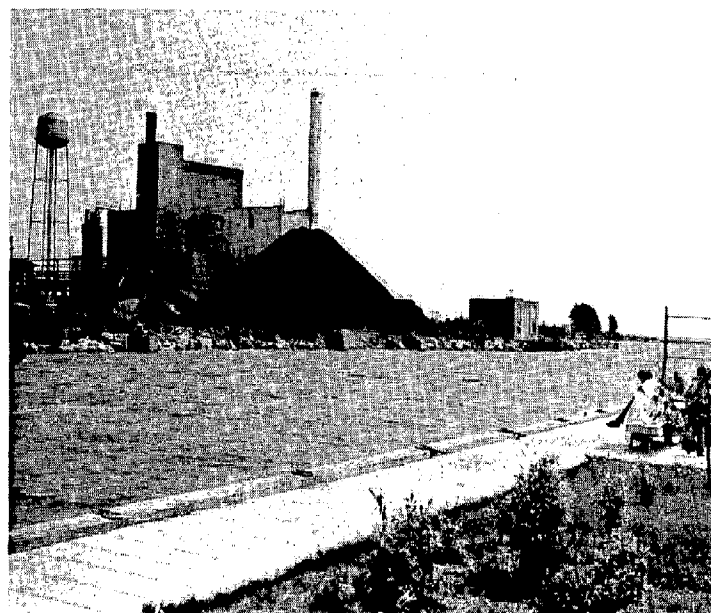
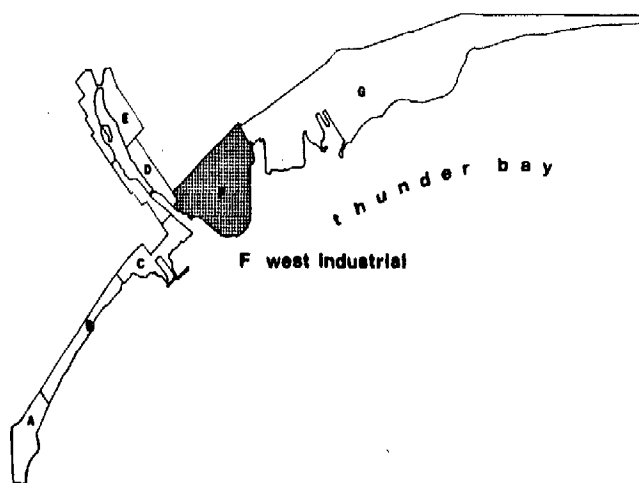
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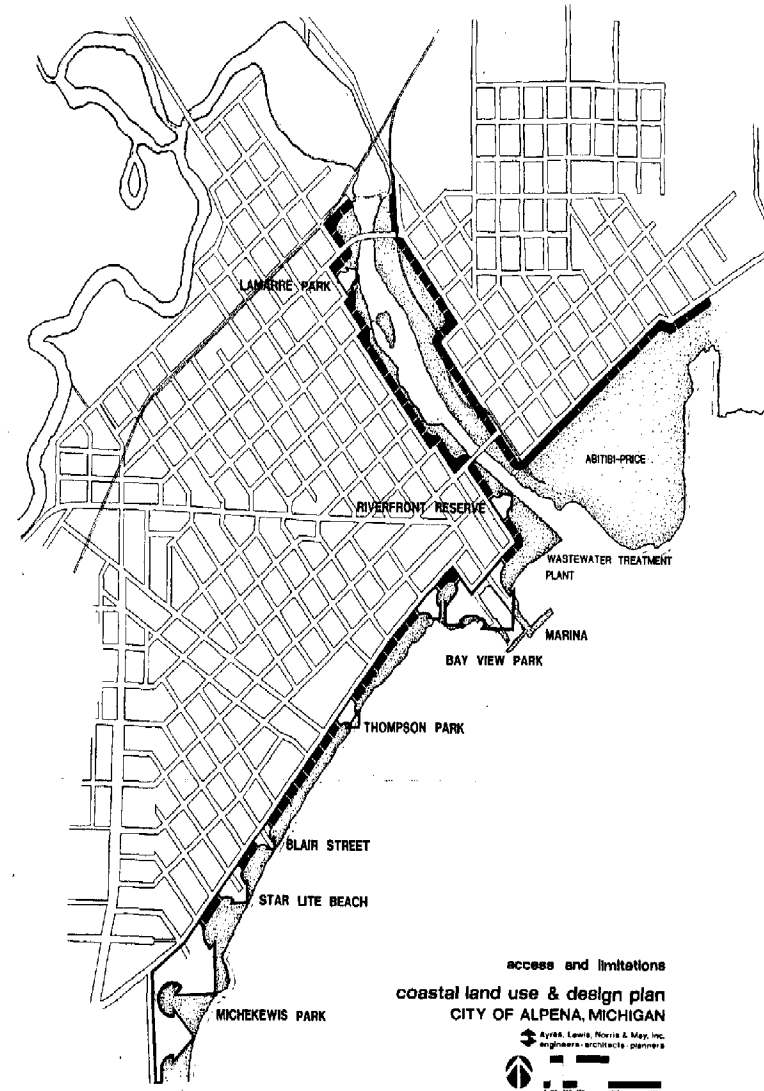
## COASTAL ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Specific conclusions regarding the problems and opportunities of each study area have been made. Broader issues and concerns impacting the entire coastal area can also be identified and analyzed. The issues and concerns are as follows:

Limited Public Access – Only 16% of the entire Thunder Bay shoreline and the Coastal River shoreline is available for public use. Public access is limited largely because of existing industrial and residential uses. However, access is also limited because the Thunder Bay and the Thunder Bay River is screened by public facilities such as the wastewater and water treatment plants, the ice arena, and the Armory.

Public access is, of course, needed for recreational activities such as fishing, boating, swimming, and picnicking. Alpena is fortunate to have sufficient beaches and picnicking areas. However, Alpena lacks a different type of waterfront access which affords views of the coastal area and utilization of the waterfront for commercial use. Visitors and residents are often unaware of the City's beaches and park areas because they cannot be seen and are poorly marked. In addition, commercial uses have not taken advantage of the waterfront. Few restaurants offer views of the Thunder Bay and Thunder Bay River and most offices and shops have oriented facilities away from the waterfront. It has been found in other cities that people like to shop, eat, and walk along the waterfront if facilities are provided.

In summary, the City of Alpena offers a unique opportunity for expanded waterfront access especially in conjunction with commercial use.



Local State and Federal Laws Pertinent to the Coastal Zone – The City of Alpena adopted local zoning regulations which controls development within the coastal area. Greenbelt zoning along coastal shorelines and high risk erosion setbacks have not, however, been adopted.

A number of State and Federal statutes govern activities in the City's coastal area. These statutes are summarized in the accompanying figure. Perhaps the most important state statute is Act 247, P.A. 1955, the Great Lakes Submerged Lands Act. This Act regulates dredging, filling, and construction within the immediate shoreline area and will have an influence upon new development proposed in the coastal area.

Laws with Direct Applicability to Activities in the City of Alpena's Coastal Zone	
<u>Law</u>	<u>Type of Jurisdiction</u>
Act 245, P.A. 1970, as amended Shorelands Protection and Management Act	Local zoning or MDNR permit process regulates new construction in designated environmental, high risk erosion, and high risk flood areas. (Note: high risk erosion and environmental areas have been designated in Alpena County.)
Act 247, P.A. 1955, as amended Great Lakes Submerged Lands Act	Permit from MDNR required to modify or construct in Great Lakes bottomlands. Marina leases also issued under this Act.
Act 184, P.A. 1980 Great Lakes Bottomland Preserve	Provides for designation and protection of Thunder Bay Great Lakes bottomlands preserve. Recovery, alteration, or destruction of abandoned property in this area is not permitted without a joint permit from MDNR and Michigan Department of State - History Division.
Act 346, P.A. 1972 Inland Lakes and Streams Act	Permit from MDNR required to dredge, fill or construct in, inland lakes or streams.
Act 347, P.A. 1970 Soil Erosion & Sedimentation Control Act	Permit from local enforcement agency required if a proposed project would disturb one or more acres of land or move earth within 500 feet of a lake or stream.
Act 203, P.A. 1980 Wetlands Protection Act	Permit from MDNR required to dredge, fill, construct, or drain any wetland contiguous to inland lakes and streams, or the Great Lakes.
Section 404 Dredge and Fill Permits	Army Corps of Engineers permit program jointly administered with State Acts 346 and 247.
Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, Section 10	Administered in conjunction with Section 404 permit program.
P.L. 95-217, Clean Water Act Section 401, Water Quality Certification	Administered by MDNR - Certification that project is in compliance with State water quality standards.



## COASTAL AREA DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

Upon completion of the coastal area analysis, alternative land use configurations and alternative site designs were developed. The alternative plans were presented at a series of public meetings. Presentations included the consideration of land use options for each study area and site designs for specific sites within the coastal area.

Public input was an important component within the overall development of the plan and was especially important during development of concept plans. Alternative designs and land use configurations were modified according to public input. At the public meetings, questionnaires were distributed which solicited information regarding future development. Taken together, the public comment heard at the meetings and response from the questionnaires guided development of the plan.

### Unified Coastal Concept

From the public meetings, certain overriding development concepts have emerged. The concepts are broad design and planning guidelines which reflect public interest and promote unifying development principles throughout the coastal area. The development concepts are based upon input gathered at the public meetings and the detailed analysis of coastal resources.

Private Investment – Wherever possible, private investment which offers public access and public uses of the waterfront should be promoted. This would include restaurants, offices, shops, and recreation uses which utilize the unique resources of the coastal area.

Local Economy – The City's existing industrial and commercial establishments should be maintained and recognized as vital components in the City's economy. Economic development options which are compatible with coastal resources should be promoted.

Tourism – Tourism should be promoted and recognized as an important facet in the local economy. Development of recreational facilities and cultural features within the coastal area should be encouraged to serve tourism.

## LAND USE AND DESIGN PLAN

The Alpena Land Use and Design Plan shown on the following page, presents the overall design and land use components for the coastal area. The intent of the Plan is to redirect the community focus back to the waterfront through a concentration of activities and improvements within each of the seven study areas. The relationship between study areas is strengthened by physical linkage, unifying coastal elements and the design concepts presented in the previous section. They are also tied together by a unified purpose to revitalize the coastal area, promote new designs, and promote new land uses.

Most proposed land uses are consistent with existing uses. It is proposed, however, that some areas along the river be considered for different uses. It should be noted that the Plan does not intend to dictate land use to private land owners. Rather, the Plan is intended to provide a coordinated guide to the future redevelopment of the coastal area.

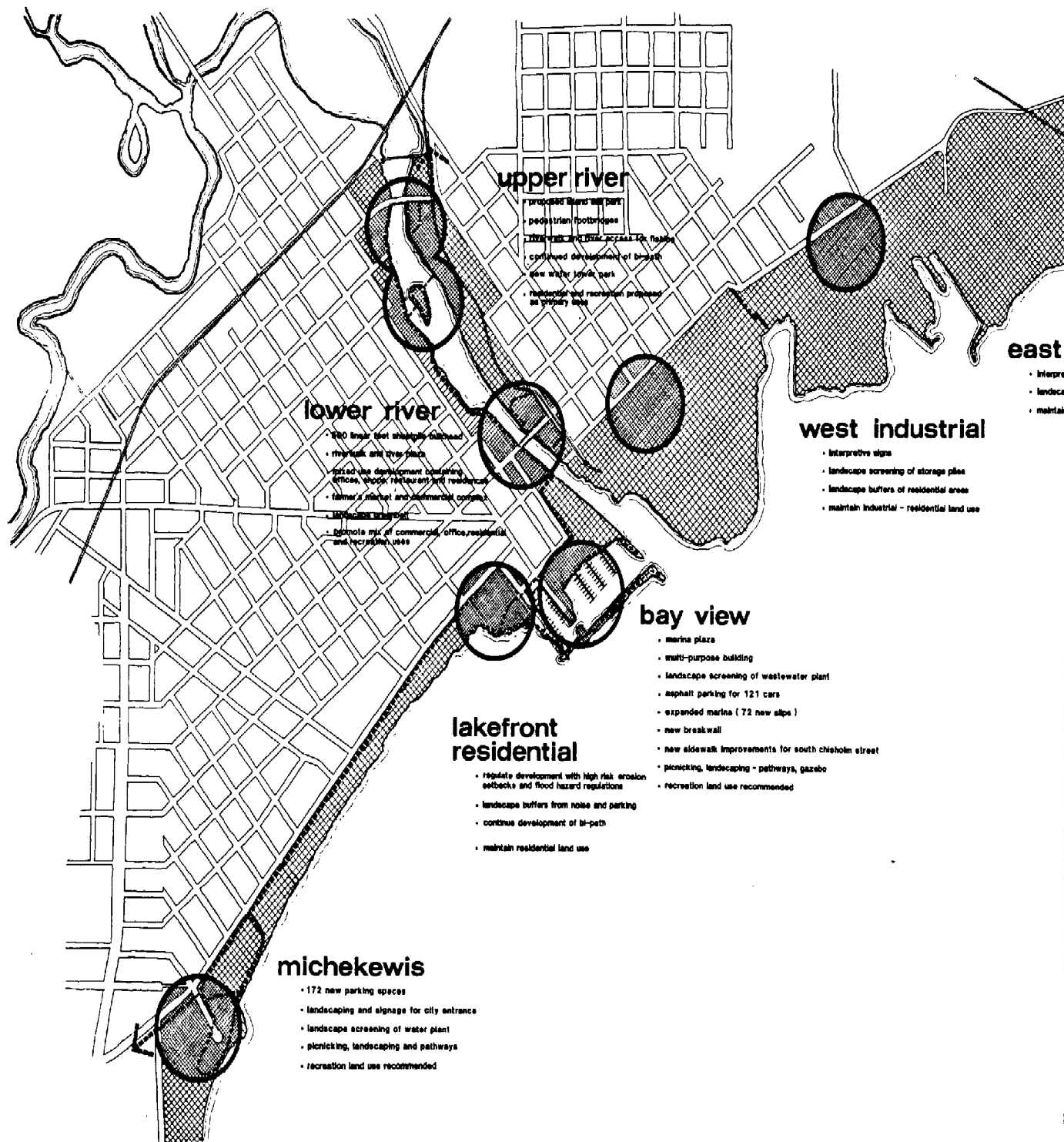
The land use and design components for each study area will be examined in detail.

## LAND USE AND DESIGN PLAN

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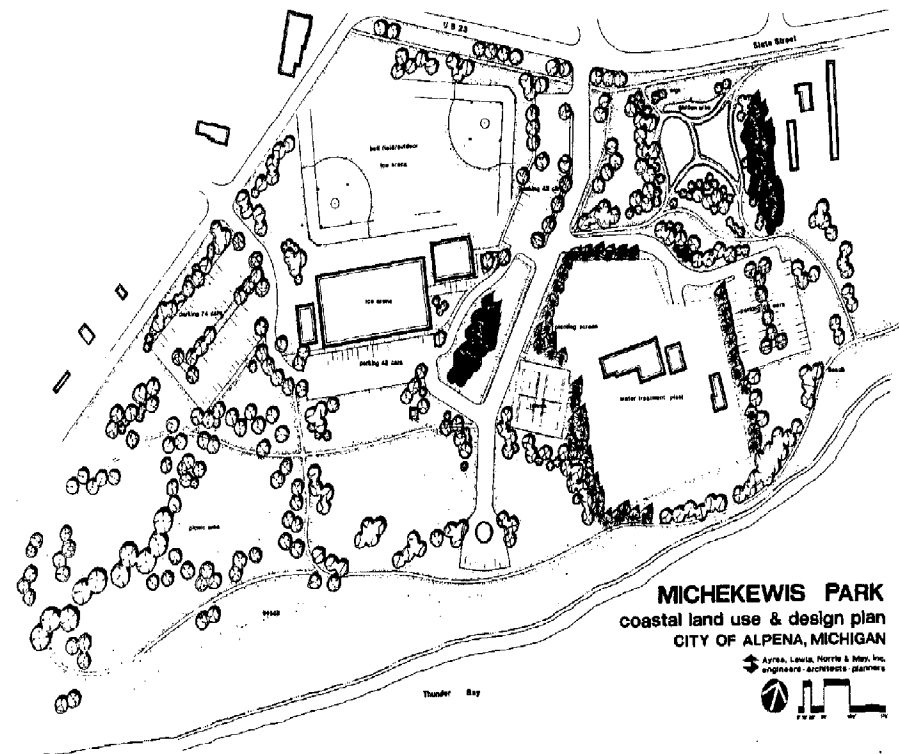
#### A) Michekewis Park

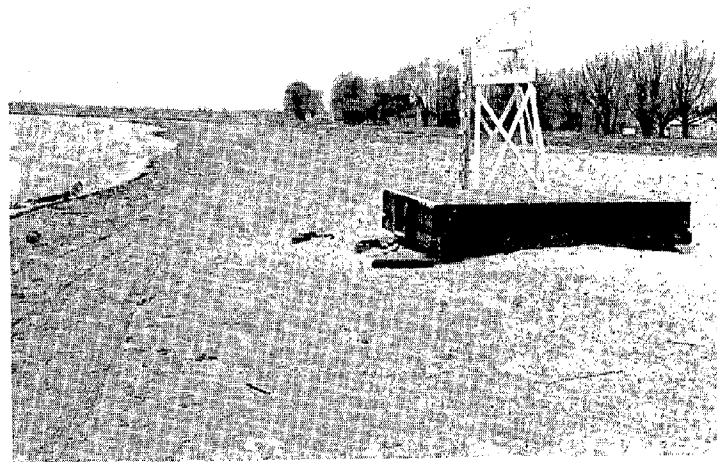
The City has already initiated improvements to this waterfront park. A new 43-space asphalt parking lot has been added. In addition, new sidewalks, area lighting, and improvements to the Ice Arena entrance area has been accomplished. The City intends to continue improvements to the Park especially to the parking facilities which are now haphazard and poorly defined. New entrance drives and circulation patterns will have autos enter or exit the park from U.S. 23 and circle behind the Ice Arena and exit or enter to Thunder Bay Drive. Proposed improvements and management recommendations are as follows:

##### Improvements

- Improve southwest picnic area by landscaping and proper drainage. Pedestrian pathway could also be added within this area as well as additional grills and picnic tables.
- Provide 172 additional parking spaces near Ice Arena and near the Water Treatment Plant.
- Develop connecting pathways between various facilities and along beach.

- Provide landscaping improvements within the park especially near the Water Treatment Plant. Landscaping near the Plant will help screen objectionable views and provide a more park-like setting.
- Develop landscaped garden park near the northeast portion of Michekewis and install City entrance signs welcoming tourists to the City. The area could then showcase the City's entrance.





#### Management Recommendations

- Permanently close Starlite Beach Road and use roadway for expanded beach area.
- Acquire additional property within the Michekewis Beach area if and when possible. Acquisition will allow expanded views of the waterfront from U.S. 23.
- Intensify beach clean-up efforts to provide clean swimming areas.
- Enforce zoning and development regulations pertaining to signs, setback, parking requirements, etc.
- Limit parking to the Bingham Street right-of-way and utilize adjoining city-owned land for parks and recreation uses.

## B) Waterfront-Residential

This stable waterfront residential area should be maintained as residential uses. However, certain management recommendations regarding future development can be made.

### Management Recommendations

- Special flood hazard areas should be recognized in order to limit hazards to life and property.
- High risk erosion setbacks as recommended by MDNR should be adopted.
- Continued use of the right-of-way for pedestrian and bicycle use should be promoted in accordance with the 1976 Bi-Path plans.
- Where possible, neighboring residents should be buffered from impacts associated with traffic noise and parking along U.S. 23.
- Install new wood decking and refurbish the Blair Street Dock so that the public may use the structure for fishing.
- Maintain Thompson Park for swimming and picnicking and install restroom facilities for park users. Planting screens between the park and neighboring residents should be maintained in order to mitigate impacts to adjoining residents.



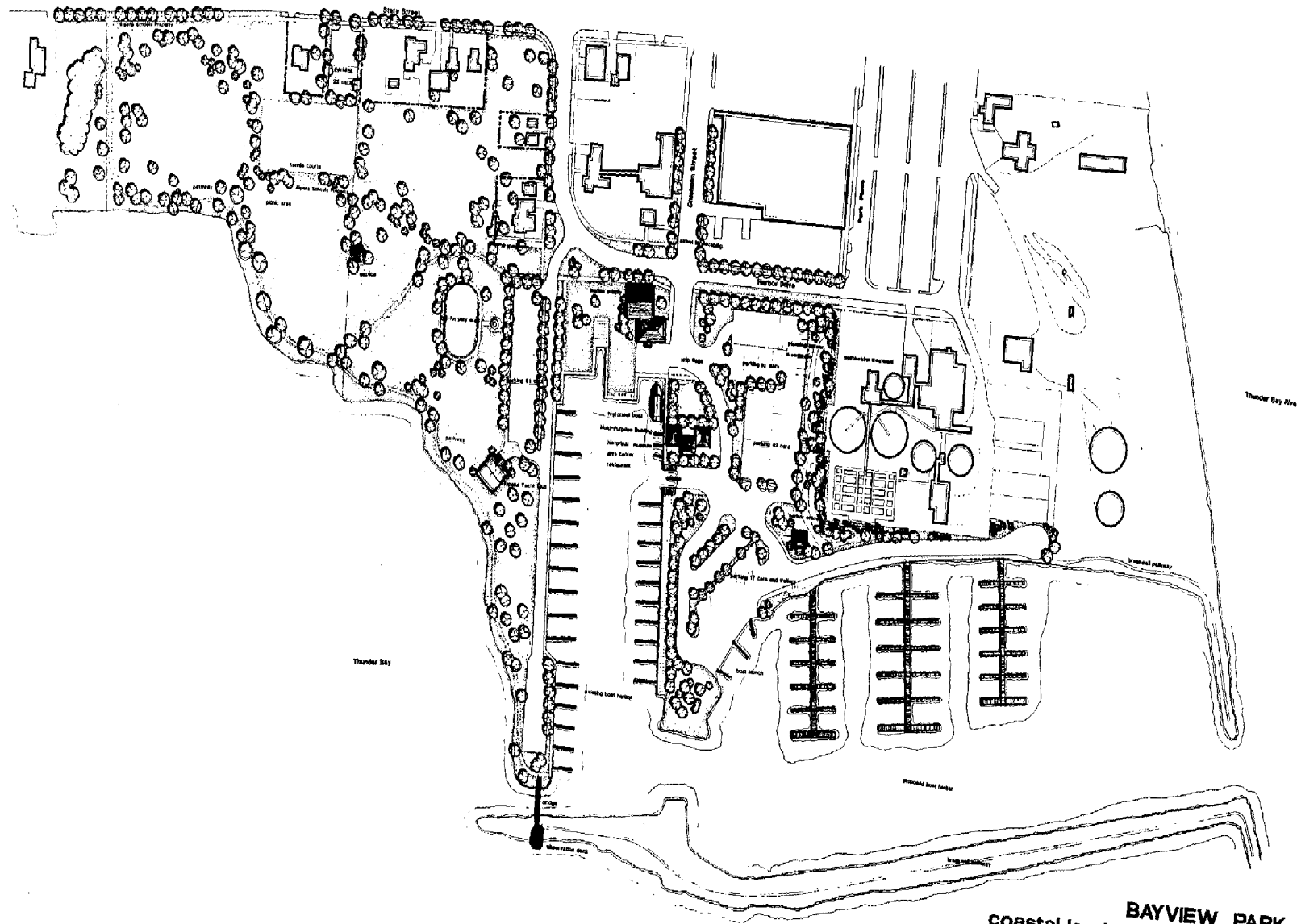
C) Bay View

Because of the park's close proximity to the Central Business District, a major improvement effort is proposed. Most proposed improvements are centered around the marina and proposed marina expansion. However, with these harbor improvements attractions for pedestrians, fishermen and the non-boating public are proposed. Pedestrian pathways, landscaping, flags, and general improvements will make Bay View Park a vibrant and attractive place to walk, view boats, or relax. It is also intended that a more successful harbor area will attract shoppers to the downtown. In order to achieve these design goals, the following improvements and management recommendations are made:

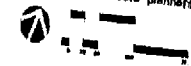
Improvements

- Improved picnic facilities and landscaping are proposed for the west end of the park. In addition, asphalt pathways could be developed near the water's edge and be linked to the Bi-Path.
- A small gazebo could be constructed for band concerts when weather permits. The gazebo would also provide an attractive architectural feature.
- Landscaping and sidewalk improvements are proposed for the south end of Chisholm Street. In addition, the foot of Chisholm Street could be marked with a small nautical plaza containing ship's flags and harbor viewing area.





**BAYVIEW PARK**  
 coastal land use & design plan  
 CITY OF ALPENA, MICHIGAN  
 Ayres, Lewis, Norris & May, Inc.  
 engineers - architects - planners



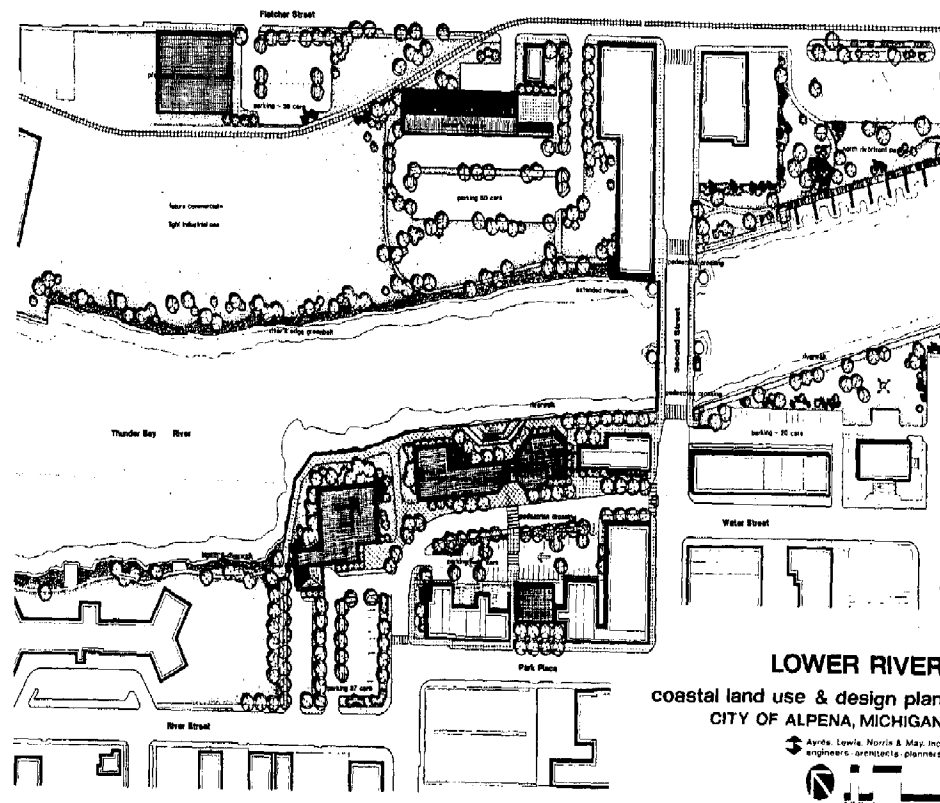
- At the north end of the harbor, a historical ship could be docked adjacent to the plaza. The ship could be representative of ships from the early lumbering era and offer interpretive displays similar to the "Welcome" in Mackinaw City.
- A multi-purpose building is also proposed near the foot of Chisholm Street. The building could provide offices, restaurant, boat supplies and could display nautical exhibits about the Thunder Bay Underwater Preserve. Charter boat information and information concerning the preserve could also be obtained at the building.
- Parking is proposed for 121 cars and 17 cars with trailers. Parking areas are paved with curb and gutter and adjoining landscaping.
- Dense landscape screening in conjunction with an earth berm is proposed along the wastewater treatment plant and boat storage areas.
- A new marina area is proposed as suggested in previous plans. The expanded harbor could accommodate 72 additional boats.
- Finally, new breakwalls are proposed to shelter the harbor, and pathways are proposed on these breakwalls for pedestrians and fishermen.



multi-use building / marina

#### Management Recommendations

- Private residents located near the west end of the park should be acquired if and when the property becomes available.
- The Alpena School property near the west end of the park should be acquired. Additional court sports, ball fields, and football fields, which can be located inland, are not recommended.
- An expanded marina will require space for additional parking and boat storage. Properties south and east of the treatment plant should be considered for future parking and storage.
- Land areas now occupied for fuel storage near the northeast end of the park should be considered for future commercial land uses. Additional shops, restaurants, and riverwall areas would compliment the Central Business District.
- The Thunder Bay Underwater Preserve should be actively promoted as the area's major tourist attraction. Facilities for divers and tourists should be developed at Bay View Park.

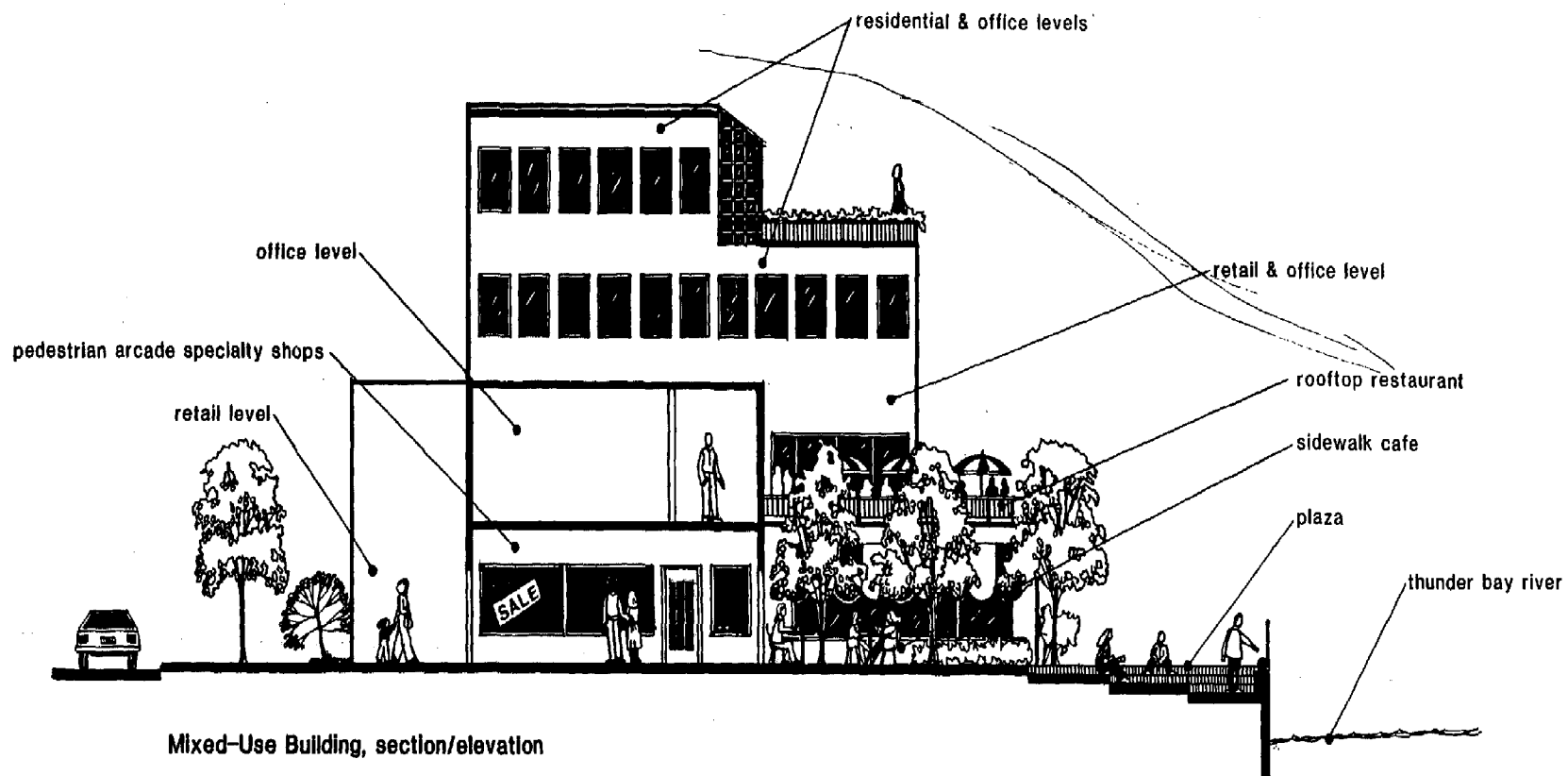


#### D) Lower River

The major design theme for this area includes riverfront improvements and uses which will compliment the Central Business District. Proposed improvements and management recommendations for this area are as follows:

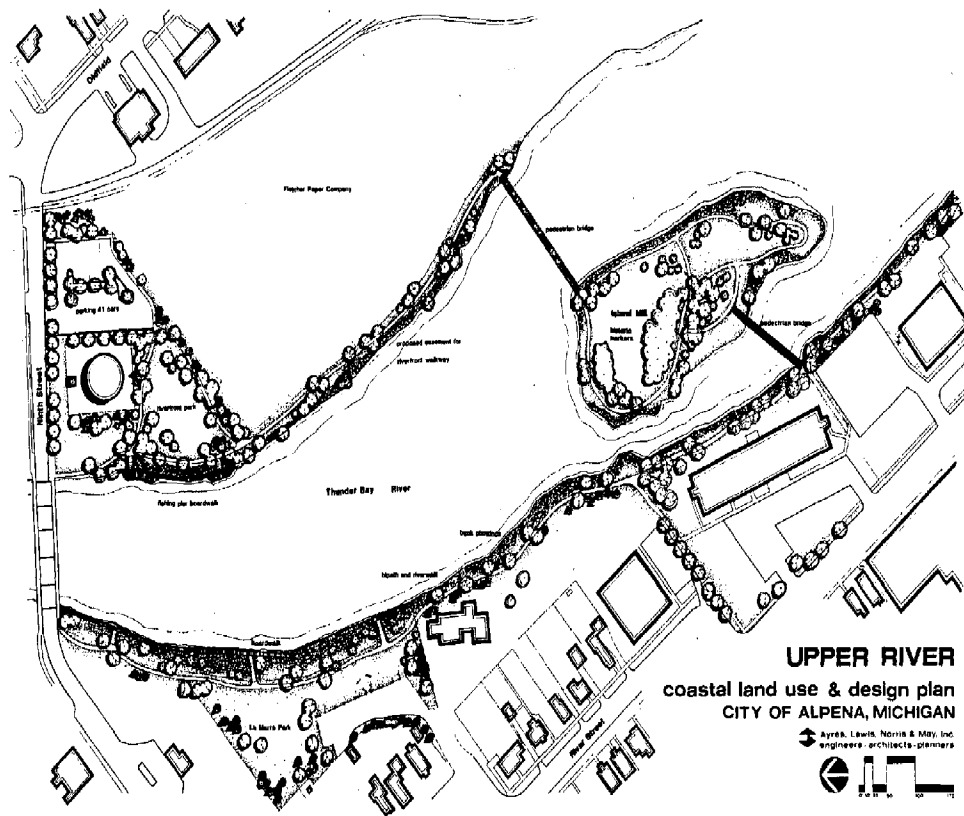
##### Improvements

- The focal point of the area is a proposed mixed use building built on the river on the site of the City parking lot. The building will contain offices, shops, restaurants, and residential units.
- Riverfront walkways are proposed for both sides of the river. The walkways will be consistent with improvements already constructed behind the Federal Armory.
- A riverfront plaza is also proposed adjacent to the mixed use building. The plaza could have a series of levels or steps upon which people could sit for outdoor concerts or activities.
- Sheet piling bulkhead system should be constructed along the northwest side of the river from the Second Street Bridge to the Alpena Savings Bank property.
- The Detroit and Mackinac Freight Building is currently used for warehousing. However, the City should consider development of a Farmer's Market. The market would contain year round shops, retail space, and vending space for produce, flowers, food, etc. The market could also be connected to the Central Business District by a pedestrian pathway along the river.



#### Management Recommendations

- The Alpena Savings Bank is considering development of a new building adjacent to the City parking lot on the river. It is recommended that the building be sited on the river with parking facilities located inland. It is also hoped that provisions for a continuous riverfront pathway will be planned on the bank site.
- Future land use for the Detroit and Mackinac site is recommended to be commercial and light industrial uses.
- A continuous riverfront pathway for both sides of the river is proposed. The pathway should connect with the Bi-Path.
- A greenbelt should be provided along the northeast side of the river.
- Repair of the Second Street drawbridge would expand boating opportunities on the upper river. It would also permit the delivery of coal by ship and by barge. While the repair of the bridge would benefit Fletcher Paper Co., and the boating public, the benefits to the general public are limited and should be assessed with regard to the overall costs of bridge repair.

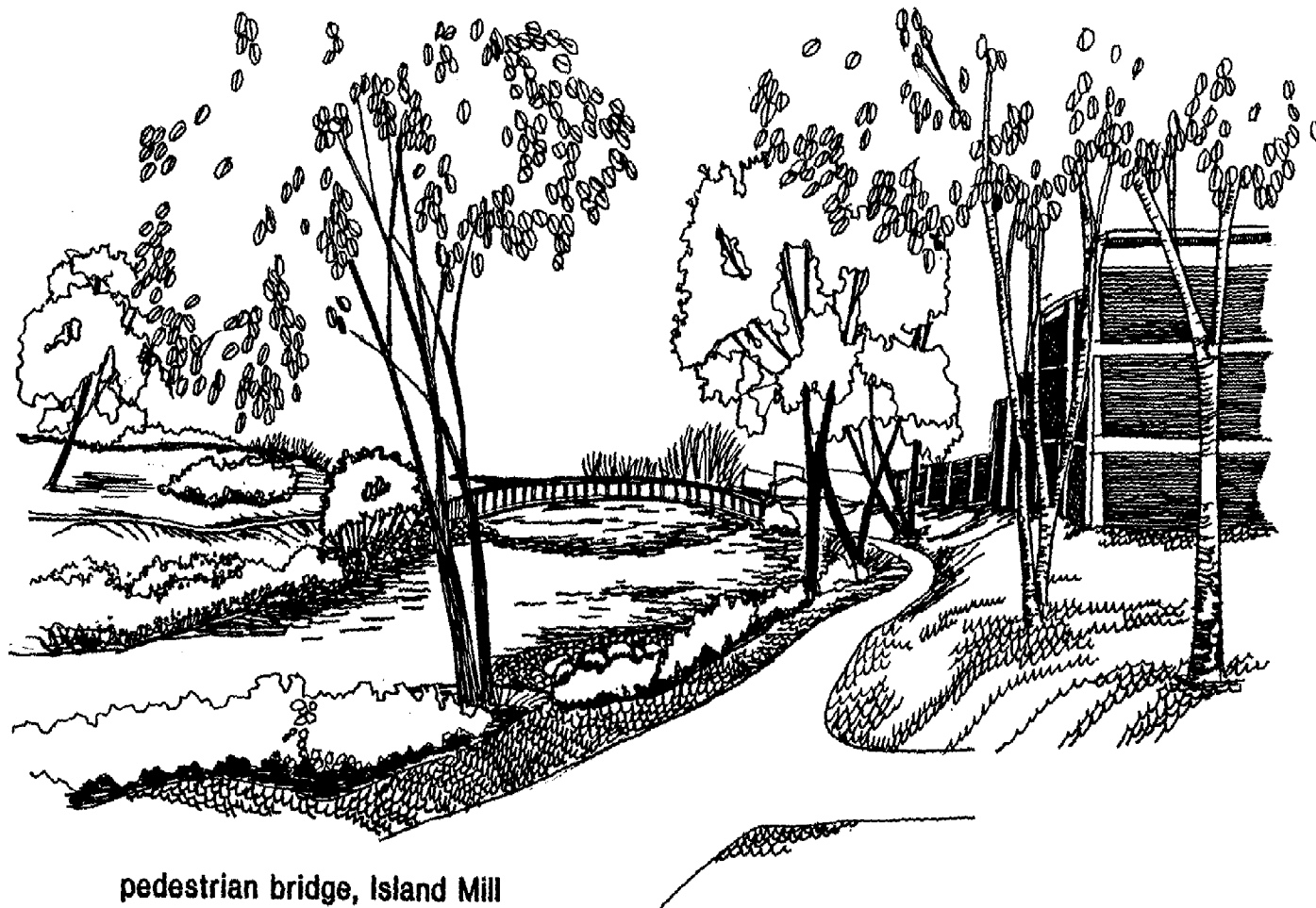


#### E) Upper River

The design concept for this area promotes recreation uses along the waterfront. Pedestrian pathways, foot bridges, and fishing access sites are all proposed. Specific recommendations for improvements and management are as follows:

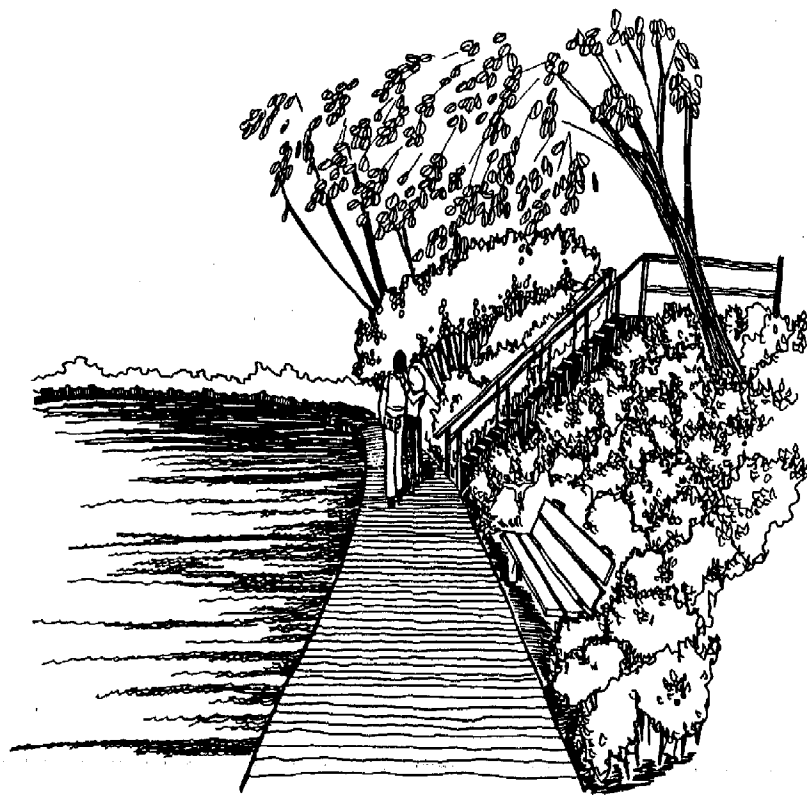
- A riverfront walkway is proposed along property owned by the Fletcher Paper Company. A pedestrian easement would be necessary prior to improvements.
- A riverfront park is proposed at the site occupied by the City's water tower. The park would include parking for 41 cars, picnicking and riverfront access for fishing.





pedestrian bridge, Island Mill

- Continued development of the Bi-Path is proposed along the west bank of the river.
- Development of Island Mill is recommended for recreation use. Pathways, and fishing access sites are proposed. In addition, historic markers noting the early history and importance of lumbering in Alpena are recommended. Pedestrian footbridges are proposed which will connect the island to both sides of the river.



boardwalk extension, la marre park

- Riverbank areas between Ninth Street and the Alpena Power Company Dam should be improved for public fishing. Efforts should include shoreline stabilization, and construction of pier or boardwalk for fishing access.

#### Management Recommendations

- Island Mill should be purchased by the City and used for recreation uses. Acquisition may be funded in part through the Michigan Land Trust Fund.
- The land bridge connecting Island Mill with the mainland should be removed or replaced with a bridge or culvert to dissipate stagnate water and permit flushing of the riverbank and channel.
- A pedestrian easement along the Fletcher Paper Company site should be purchased or leased.
- Various spots along the riverbank are littered with debris and should be cleaned. In addition, some areas of riverbank are eroding. Soil erosion is unsightly and contributes to poor water quality. Efforts should be directed to revegetating or fortifying the eroding banks.

F) West Industrial

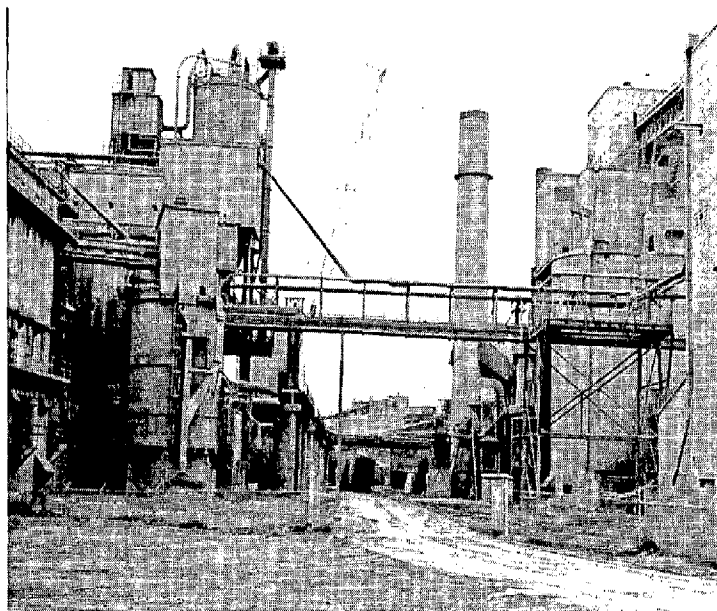
This area includes a combination of industrial and residential uses with the dominant land use being the Abitibi-Price Plant. Most land areas are occupied and it is unlikely that major land use changes will occur within the near future. Management recommendations are suggested for the area and are as follows:

Management Recommendations

- Landscape screening could be installed adjacent to storage piles and areas having objectionable views. Small earth berms could be used in conjunction with plantings. Special plantings could be placed near the river where views from Bay View Park and where views from the water are especially noticeable.
- Where possible, residential properties along Ford Road should be buffered. Landscape screening, fences and earth berms could be used.
- The Plant should continue efforts to improve air quality and water quality.
- The interpretive aspects of the Plant should be promoted. Signs denoting the hardboard making process and the use of local timber could be placed near the entrance of the plant.

### G) East Industrial

This area includes land occupied by the National Gypsum Corporation-Huron Portland Cement Plant. Land uses will likely remain industrial for many years. While some modifications to the existing plant site will likely occur, no major changes are foreseen. Management recommendations for the area are as follows:



### Management Recommendations

- Landscape screening could be installed near areas having objectionable views. Earth berms could also be used in conjunction with the plantings.
- Efforts should continue to minimize dust emitted from the Plant. In addition, water quality of Thunder Bay should also be protected.
- The interpretive aspects of the Plant should be promoted. Signs could inform visitors of the cement making process, as well as quarry operations. The signs could be placed near the plant entrance and at various points along North Point Road.
- Beach property near Norwegian Creek is privately-owned and used by the public for swimming and picnicking. The area should be policed and maintained in an orderly fashion. Existing industrial zoning should also be maintained because of the proximity to the Huron Portland Cement Plant and because of the sites potential for future industrial development.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The Land Use and Design Plan graphically illustrates improvement proposals for the coastal area. However, the Plan is incomplete without an implementation program which will provide the City with guidance toward actual construction. The implementation program consists of project costs, priorities, funding sources, and responsible agencies and administrative mechanisms.

### Project Costs and Priorities

The full implementation of the Alpena Land Use and Design Plan is projected over a period of ten years. The chart on the following pages illustrates estimated costs and priorities of specific projects associated with the area design plans. Project priorities are broken down by high (implemented within two years), medium (2-5 years), and low (5-10 years). Assignment of priorities is an indication of project importance, as well as the potential for implementation within a given time frame. Costs are estimated as total project costs regardless if implemented by public agencies or private organizations.

High priority implementation is recommended for various low cost landscaping projects, as well as improvements for the south end of Chisholm Street. The high priority projects are intended to produce quickly implemented, highly visible improvements which have relatively low costs.

The remainder of the projects are medium and low priority. Projects rated as medium and low priority are still very important to the overall success of the Plan. However, it was felt that the community's limited resources should be devoted toward more visible projects.

**ALPENA, MICHIGAN  
COASTAL LAND USE AND DESIGN PLAN  
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

Planning Area	Project	Estimated Cost (1982 prices)	Implementing Authority	Priority
<b>Michekewis</b>	1) Improve picnic areas, provide pathways and add landscaping	\$ 30,000	City	Low
	2) Add 172 parking spaces and entrance drives	\$110,000	City	Medium
	3) Landscape City entrance area and install new signs	\$ 18,000	City	High
	4) Install landscape screening of water treatment plant	\$ 10,000	City	High
<b>Waterfront Residential</b>	1) Repair Blair Street Dock for fishing and public access	\$ 55,000	City	Medium
<b>Bay View</b>	1) Improve picnic area, provide pathways, add gazebo and landscaping	\$ 45,000	City	Low
	2) Improve south end of Chisholm Street sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, street furniture	\$ 40,000	City	High
	3) Develop Marina Plaza with flag poles, landscaping, and paving	\$ 30,000	City	High
	4) Develop Multi-Purpose Building, including offices, restaurant, shops, etc.	\$ ---	Private	Medium
	5) Install landscape screening of wastewater treatment plant and boat storage area	\$ 18,000	City	High
	6) Install 121 paved parking spaces and 17 car/boat trailer spaces	\$ 95,000	City	Low
	7) Expand boat harbor (72 new slips)	\$ ---	City	Low
	8) Provide new breakwalls	\$ ---	City	Low
	9) Provide historic ship for public viewing	\$250,000	Private/City	Low

Coastal Land Use and Design Plan Implementation Program (continued)

Planning Area	Project	Estimated Cost (1982 prices)	Implementing Authority	Priority
Lower River	1) Install 500 linear feet of breakwall along river north of Second Street Bridge	\$250,000	City	Low
	2) Develop riverwalk and plaza with landscaping, lights and seats	\$ 95,000	City	Low
	3) Develop mixed use building containing offices, shops, restaurant, residences	\$ ---	Private	Low
	4) Develop farmer's market and commercial complex on northeast side of river	\$ ---	Private	Low
	5) Develop northeast river bank pathway and landscape greenbelt	\$ 50,000	Private	Low
Upper River	1) Purchase, lease, or acquire easements for Island Mill and Fletcher Paper Company river bank property	\$ ---	City	High
	2) Improve Island Mill with landscaping, historic markers, and footbridges	\$ 90,000	City	Medium
	3) Develop river walk Bi-Path and secure easements	\$ 60,000+	City	Low
	4) Develop Water Tower Park which will include parking, picnic areas, and river access	\$ 90,000	City	Low

Priorities

High = implemented within 1 to 2 years  
 Medium = implemented within 2 to 5 years  
 Low = implemented within 5 to 10 years

Summary of Projected Costs

High Priority Costs = \$116,000  
 Medium Priority Costs = \$255,000  
 Low Priority Costs = \$965,000

## Funding Sources and Mechanisms

Due to the cost of many projects, it is unrealistic to think that the entire Plan can be funded with local governmental funds. It is equally unrealistic to think that some local funds will not have to be raised. The value of the Plan is that it gives the City a tool to approach local groups, Federal and State agencies for implementation.

While the status of many Federal and State funding programs is unclear at this time, it is likely that some funding for local recreation, public works, and community development will continue. The City, with the help of its consultants and staff, should monitor the funding situation and be prepared to act when funds become available. At the current time, a number of funding programs are still in place, although their long-term future is unknown. The following funding programs may continue to have funds available for the improvement projects proposed by this Plan:

- Coastal Zone Management Program - Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources
- Land and Water Conservation Fund - Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources
- Michigan Land Trust Fund
- Community Development Block Grants, Small Cities Program - U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development
- Urban Development Action Grants - U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development
- Miscellaneous - In addition to the programs named above, the Dept. of Natural Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operate certain programs designed to meet specific recreational and navigational objectives



The potential availability of grant funds does not eliminate the necessity to finance all or portions of projects with local funds. It is the rule rather than the exception that Federal grants require the local unit of government to fund a portion of the project. Local funding can be raised through the general fund, revenue sharing, general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, special millage, special assessment, and private contributions.

It is clear, though, that the need for private funding will become increasingly important in the future. In addition to traditional sources of funding, State legislation allows municipalities to establish a variety of mechanisms to promote a public-private partnership for economic improvement. The Economic Corporation Act, the Commercial Redevelopment Districts Act, and the Downtown Development Authority Act are particularly applicable to Alpena's coastal area. When and if these various incentive programs are used to promote development, the City should ensure that proposed projects conform to the basic objectives of the Alpena Coastal Land Use and Design Plan.

Volunteer efforts should not be overlooked. Concerned citizens can do a number of worthwhile, low cost improvements within the coastal area. Possible projects include:

- festivals, art fairs, etc., which attract people to the waterfront
- promotion, newsletters, and attention concerning the value of coastal areas
- low cost, volunteer labor projects such as landscaping, signage, clean up, etc., from civic groups, garden clubs, etc.
- "adopt-a-tree" programs and charitable functions

## Summary

Alpena's Coastal Land Use and Design Plan emphasizes the importance of the City's coastal resources. It attempts to determine the best use and maximum opportunity for coastal lands. The Plan also emphasizes the advantages of continued economic development while expanding recreational uses. Specific site designs and implementation programs are suggested for future development. The Plan is a blueprint for the future improvement of the City's coastal area, yet the impetus for improvement lies with the residents and City officials. Once again, the City of Alpena invites its residents to participate in the revitalization of the coastal area and acknowledge the unique resources of the waterfront.



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